

NEWS

From Supervisor Bill Postmus First District, San Bernardino County



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STATEMENT OF SUPERVISOR BILL POSTMUS REGARDING PROPOSED DESERT PHOENIX GROUP HOME

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairman Bill Postmus today made the following statement during the Board's Open Session as a report of Closed-Session actions:

"Two weeks ago, the Board of Supervisors directed County Counsel to prepare to take legal action within two weeks against the State Department of Developmental Services, the Desert Phoenix Group Home, and the Inland Regional Center. This was to prevent the placement of four registered sex offenders in the community of Phelan in my district.

"Today, the Board of Supervisors decided not to initiate this litigation at this time because the agencies in question have represented to the County that they no longer intend to place these four individuals in the Desert Phoenix Home.

"County Counsel has advised that, in light of the state's assurances to us in this case, we no longer have a factual basis for a legal cause of action.

"We're continuing to communicate with the State about the Board's and the community's concerns over public safety and the risks that individuals with this type of criminal history bring to a residential neighborhood.

"This Board, and I in particular, will continue to monitor the circumstances of any intended residents with respect to this group home or any other group home, because we believe that it's contrary to the intent of the law governing the licensing of group homes to use residences as criminal detention facilities.

"Disabled people should be respected and welcomed into our neighborhoods in 'assisted living' arrangements – the kind of small group homes that were

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contemplated by state law; however, when state administrative agencies abuse that law and use these residential homes for individuals who present a public safety danger, they need to be stopped either through litigation or a change in statutory law.

“On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I want to assure the public that we will remain vigilant in maintaining our position that the agencies in question have shown their intention to misuse social service residential homes as substitutes for criminal detention facilities. And we are prepared to take action if they attempt to do it again in the future.

“Finally, I would like to say that many members of the community have been continuing to express their concerns, and I encourage them and join them in communicating with our representatives in the State Legislature regarding this issue.

“I will be bringing proposals to support state legislation relative to this issue to the Board for its consideration in the near future.”